A Friend

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“Smith! Put that down and go back to the control room!”
“No, sir! I’ve got it now; I’m going to sell this stuff if I have to kill you to do it!” he cried hysterically.
“No! Put it down!” Dr. Muirsen leaped across the room and clasped the neck of the bottle at the very instant Smith swung it over his shoulder, trying to squirm free. Crack! and it was shattered against the cabinet corner. For an instant there was a red tinge and every statesman’s receiver went blank. Then sinking, melting destruction—and finally black nothing—.

In the grey bleakness of a snow-covered plain in northern Canada was a great, gaping, jagged pit—stark with black ruin. But the land of snow and ice was motionless and still as death, and the heavens were glorious with cold, keen starlight.

A Friend
By J. H. Pederson

The rain beat down in sheets upon my head
And trickled down my back—a chilly rain
Blown swiftly by a wind that howled in pain
As southward, through the leafless trees, it sped.
I heard a crashing here and there, as dead
Limbs, torn from trees, fell to the ground. In vain
I splashed along—no friendly window pane
Appeared to guide me to a house, and bed.

I groped through blackness till I reached a tree.
Its bark was rough enough that I could squeeze
My fingers in its cracks. It seemed to lend
A hand for me to grasp; it rested me—
Took weight from tired feet—left me at ease.
I’d been alone, but found this tree—a friend.